REMARKS

Applicant's amended Claim 1, as now amended, is to a workpiece-transfer device for loading a material workpiece in a workpiece-machining device and unloading a machined product workpiece from the workpiece-machining device. The workpiece-transfer device includes a movement means with a rectangular coordinate system for moving a traveling body in a first horizontal direction along the direction in which the workpiece-machining device and a workpiece-storage device stand. The workpiece-machining device and the workpiece-storage device are in a line along the first direction with the workpiece-transfer device located in that line therebetween, as well as in a second horizontal direction orthogonal to the first horizontal direction. The traveling body includes a gripping means for gripping a material or product workpiece, and the workpiece-storage device includes a product-housing section arranged for stacking of machined product workpieces and a material-housing section arranged for stacking of material workpieces provided in parallel, on one side of the workpiece-machining device, in the second direction. In the present device, the travelling body is positionable above the product-housing section and the material-housing section of the workpiece-storage device. Such an arrangement is not taught or suggested in the Kawada et al. reference.

Reconsideration and removal of the rejection of Applicant's claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kawada et al. (U.S. 5,358,375) are respectfully requested in view of the present amendments to Claim 1 and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, it is alleged that Kawada shows a movement means 127, workpiece machining device 1, workpiece storage device 5R-L, a gripping means 129, and a product-housing section 5L and material housing section 5R, with a skeleton housing section. The workpiece-

machining device and workpiece storage device are said to be in line along a first direction Y with the workpiece-transfer device located therebetween (Fig. 1).

In response to previous arguments, the Examiner is of the opinion that Kawada teaches the workpiece-machining device and workpiece-storage device in line along a first direction (Y) with the workpiece-transfer device located therebetween, as well as in a second direction X orthogonal to the first direction Y.

Applicant does not agree with the Examiner's interpretation of the Kawada reference. A reasonable study of Kawada does not show the workpiece-machining device 1 and workpiece-storage device 5R-L being in line along any direction, and especially not along direction Y, with the workpiece-transfer device (un-numbered by the Examiner, but presumably a combination of movement means 127 and gripping means 129) located therebetween, as well as in a second direction X orthogonal to the first direction Y. The reference to Fig. 1 by the Examiner is not understood since the product storage device 5L, if in line with material storage device 5R, is not in line with the workpiece-machining device 1, with a workpiece-transfer device also in line therewith. Applicant has amended Claim 1 to clarify that the workpiece-machining device and workpiece-storage device are in a line with the workpiece transfer device in the same line. In Kawada, while the processing machine 1 may be said to be intermediate 5L, 5R, it is not in line therewith with the transfer device in the same line.

The Examiner should take note of the Kawada reference, at Col. 3, lines 1-22, where it is explained that the processing machine 1 is on a floor and that, behind processing machine 1 (on the left side in Fig. 2), first and second stackers 5R, 5L with vertical shelves are installed, and that "The

worktable is so designed as to stand at an intermediate position between the first and second stackers as well as positions in front of the stackers" (Col. 3, lines 21-22: emphasis added).

Also, it is stated at Col. 8, lines 6-10; "Since the first and second stackers 5R, 5L are provided beside the laser processing apparatus 1 as described above, transfer of the pellets between the stackers and the processing machine will be carried out quickly." (emphasis added)

In addition, in the present claimed device, the travelling body is positionable above both the product-housing section and the material housing section of the workpiece-storage device, which is not possible in the Kawada et al. device. This feature has also been added to amended claim 1 to clarify the claims. The attached Exhibit A shows differences between the present claimed workpiece-transfer device and the Kawada et al. arrangement for better explanation to the Examiner.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claim 1, as amended, and Claims 2, 3 and 19 dependent thereon are believed to be in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Version with markings to show changes made**."

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures: Version with markings to show changes made

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE 09/400,833

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (Four Times Amended) A workpiece-transfer device for loading a material workpiece in a workpiece-machining device and unloading a machined product workpiece from the workpiece-machining device, characterized in that the workpiece-transfer device includes a movement means with a rectangular coordinate system for moving a traveling body in a first horizontal direction along the direction in which the workpiece-machining device and a workpiece-storage device stand, said workpiece-machining device and said workpiece-storage device being in a line along said first direction with said workpiece-transfer device located in said line therebetween, as well as in a second horizontal direction orthogonal to the first horizontal direction and in that said traveling body includes a gripping means for gripping a material or product workpiece, wherein said workpiece-storage device includes a product-housing section arranged for stacking of machined product workpieces and a material-housing section arranged for stacking of material workpieces provided in parallel, on one side of said workpiece-machining device, in said second direction, and said traveling body is positionable above the product-housing section and the material-housing section of said workpiece-storage device.